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TUESDAY
NOVEMBER 3, 1953

Rose at 7:15 and we congregated at 8:30 in the foyer of the Ritz Hotel. Mountains of guns, shells, shooting-sticks and other equipment were thrown into three cars and we motored 45 kilometers through the Castilian plain, almost bare of trees and green vegetation, severe and dignified, to our tryst with the gamekeepers and beaters. What followed was superb. Six drives, in lovely sunshine, in which we brought to book 520 partridges, 1 hare, 1 hawk, and 1 magpie. I killed 44 partridges and, like the others except the Spaniards, should have done much better. Our host, Don Something de Gregorio of the Caceria Coto - a charming man, alone knocked off over a hundred birds. For thirty years his shoot has averaged between 8 and 10 thousand partridges per annum. We were twelve guns in all, including Cervera, a well-known architect named Cayetano Cabanes, and the Duc de la Granja. Each of us had a "Secretary", who with an assistant loaded guns, toted them around, counted the birds shot and retrieved them. Mine was a gay chain-cigarette-smoker, very adept at his task, voluble to the last degree, blithely indifferent to my inability to bind us together conversationally.

We had a light snack at eleven and a many-course lunch with many wines served in a tent at three. The Spaniards were the soul of courtesy, and really seemed as delighted as they said they were to entertain us. We had many laughs in a sort of lingua franca.

The birds are all redlegs, and driven so as to present difficult shots. Compared with this, killing quail seems simple. At my best butt I killed 21 birds.

We were back at the Ritz soon after seven. A heavenly day.

Buddy North and I had dinner together and I got to bed after midnight. He is an entertaining man and simply must write the history of the Ringling brothers and their circus.

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